

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 23, 2018

TITLE: 118-126 State Street – New Development of a Hotel in the Downtown Core District. 4th Ald. Dist. (46482)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

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ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Cliff Goodhart, Dawn O’Kroley, Tom DeChant, Christian Harper, Michael Rosenblum, Rafeeq Asad and Amanda Hall.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 23, 2018, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** on the new development of a hotel located at 118-126 State Street. Registered in support of the project were Jeff Vercauteren, Kenneth Garland, Eric Nordeen, Matthew Prescott and Bill White, all representing Ascendant Holdings; and Greg Frank. The development team has recently acquired two adjacent parcels (124-126 State Street, the old Tiki Bar) with tonight’s plans reflecting the additional square footage and expanded footprint, allowing them to further address the State Street frontage. They did appear before the Landmarks Commission and received comments at their May 14, 2018 meeting. The project has frontages on State, Dayton and Carroll Streets. The existing context is a make-up of 3 and 4 story existing buildings on that block, and their strategy is to develop a base condition more reflective of that context. This also lends itself to more masonry stone represented in the building with a heavier bottom, a middle portion and a top cap portion. They also spent time studying the ratios of solids to voids in the existing buildings. Earlier designs had larger expanses of glass, but they are now looking at more of a punched opening rhythm to tie in with existing buildings on the block. As a result of initial comments the team received regarding State Street they have edited down the language to one architectural vocabulary rather than rendering it as several different pieces of a building. Dark fenestration will play off the lighter limestone, looking at the scale and finish of the limestone pieces and how they align with the existing context while maintaining the existing historic buildings on either side of the State Street façade. They are using the massing as a way of breaking down that long frontage for more of a rhythm along State Street that responds to the width of the historic storefront buildings there. The setback at the third floor respects the datums created with the existing building fabric. Having recessed entries will draw attention to those areas on Dayton and Carroll Streets. Stone bay window vocabulary is being looked at as a subtle reveal. The rhythm of glazing and opening at the pedestrian level will be a key to activating Dayton and Carroll Streets, as will the restaurant. Previous and current plans were shown in address of the Commission’s comments from the November 2017 meeting.

Comments and questions were as follows:

- Dayton and Carroll are probably the most successful elevations. I'm not sold on the bookend concept on State Street, there's still a lot going on. It looks like 3 different buildings, but overall Dayton and Carroll are cleaner.
- When you first appeared you had some pretty nice, modern alternatives we all were very happy with. You've decided to go down this more Neo-classical, more traditional way. It's improved as far as that goes with the base, middle and top, and the more traditional proportions and restraint. But on State Street, by just grafting the skin of old buildings onto this building, it doesn't seem to be that authentic. The precedence we have as a Commission with State Street projects, right across the street where they did reconstruct the building on the point but they took care to make it the original height, scale and materials. Same thing with the Castle and Doyle building; they didn't add to the top of them. In my mind we should be consistent in that regard instead of approving these skin grafts. Those facades lose their context when they have all this stuff on top of them.
- I read the Landmarks Commission minutes, and they were having trouble keeping those facades relating to this massive new thing. You're using this stone that's not really construction stone, somehow that doesn't tie to the scale of State Street. Something more modern is more fitting, something with lighter construction that wouldn't impose itself.
- Last time there was conversation about that your challenge is going to be this height. I can't recall all the comments but certainly that I didn't support this height. Now you have this heavy mass, you built out wider and you're out to the party line so you have blank facades, when you have the opportunity for a much lighter building. I almost have more concerns now that you've widened your footprint but not lightened your approach. Specifically State Street has this rhythm of first floor entrances and activities. Your last iteration I was encouraging more pedestrian entries, more access in and out of the building. Now you've widened it but further restricted the pedestrian activity on State Street; that's a huge challenge and one of the most important things about this project.
- On the first floor you have an almost total glass presentation with a heavy building above, it almost looks like it's going to collapse.
- More renderings somewhere between instead of focusing on the first floor, show the entire building. You need to adjust the perspective point looking up to the fourth floor. It's a very, very big building.
- I do like the first floor on State Street recessed back and forth. The canopy works too.
 - (Applicant) Is there anything from the prior iteration that you thought was working?
- I thought the top architecture and the piece coming down was much more interesting than the stone pieces. It looked like something of today. In terms of the sense of rhythm and materials.
- The earlier iteration is much lighter and more sensitive.
- I liked the first iteration as well.
- I remember the last iteration, I wanted you to go more modern but you went completely the opposite way. With this one, I just could not stand how far those bays went out. This works in terms of materials, what's prowed and what's recessed, it's cleaner, this worked. Now we're just stone.
- I like the materials for this height. It's going to have to own that it's that much higher than everything else. I'm empathetic to the "too much" comments but I wouldn't deviate too far from that. I think we're getting a lot closer.
 - I would ask the same question about the State Street portion. Were there positives here?
- I noticed on the previous design, if you look at historic they have a tall window and a light (transom) window above it. You have that similar design here. Insofar as you're trying to relate to a vocabulary you sort of abandon it here too.
- The first iteration doesn't look at big and heavy as what's being presented now.
- Like it appreciates the views and the place it's set in.
 - One of the comments we received last time was to take some design inspiration from that building, but maybe we heard the comment differently from how it was intended.

- If you're going to insist on this traditional route that's why we pointed those out.
- But even the Tenney building has a certain lightness and rhythm to it.
- And it's not ashamed to say I'm a vertical building.
 - That might help combat some of the wideness aspect I'm hearing comments on.
- I would get rid of the bookends. Have it be one building, the composition of two different buildings with something in the middle doesn't work.
- The whole framing of them takes away from it.
- Your new building has nothing to do with the bookends, get rid of them and make a new building.
- You took the lines and masses up of those two buildings but then you were playing with this other thing in between that creates all sorts of busyness. All that in between doesn't work.
- I've always felt when you're trying to integrate or work with historic facades a contemporary contrast is much easier. Going back to what you presented earlier would be much more successful. It's creating the wrong type of tension.
- Where you have the glass guardrail at the top, that's completely foreign to the heavy building. The storefront is foreign so everything in between doesn't make sense.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.